

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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NEW REPORT BY DOE INSPECTOR GENERAL UNCOVERS SECURITY WEAKNESSES AT NUCLEAR SITE

*Markey Questions DOE Secretary Bodman on Security Failures at
Nevada Test Site, other Nuke Facilities*

WASHINGTON, DC- Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the Select Committee on Homeland Security and co-Chair of the House Bipartisan Task Force on Nonproliferation, today released a letter to Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman regarding security services provided by Wackenhut Corporation at the Nevada Test Site (NTS), Oak Ridge National Laboratory and other nuclear weapons facilities.

“The Bush Administration wants to build new nuclear weapons and resume nuclear testing, yet insists on employing the corporate equivalent of the Keystone Cops to guard its nuclear facilities,” said Rep. Markey. “In the past year alone, Wackenhut personnel have been found cheating on security tests, altering security training requirements, violating DOE regulations, failing at security exercises and retaliating against whistleblowers – why hasn’t the company been permanently barred from guarding nuclear weapons and weapons-usable materials?”

In Secretary Bodman’s recent testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, he indicated that the Bush Administration wants the Nevada Test Site to be made ready to resume nuclear weapons testing, and in the past several years the Bush Administration has relentlessly pushed for funds to develop new nuclear weapons. The resumption of testing and development of new weapons would be the wrong signal to send countries whose nuclear weapons programs we are trying to curtail, such as Iran and North Korea. Moreover, recent reports suggest that there are serious security deficiencies at DOE nuclear weapons complex involving Wackenhut Corporation.

- In August 2004, a force-on-force exercise was held at the Nevada Test Site. Evidently, during this exercise, two Wackenhut guards confronted each other after rounding a corner of a building, one “shot” the other in a friendly fire incident, and the second then started a fist fight with the first because he was angry about being “killed”. Needless to say, the guard force failed the force-on-force exercise. The DOE response to these problems is reportedly to have relocated Wackenhut guard forces from the equally troubled Oak Ridge site.
- A February 11, 2005 Department of Energy Inspector General (DOE IG) report indicated that a Wackenhut employee (along with a DOE employee) improperly took government and personal handguns to a training exercise at the NTS in 2003.
- In September 2004, a disastrous force-on-force exercise was held at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. According to press reports, a mock attack force began a security drill, only to be confronted by armed Wackenhut guards who did not know a drill was taking place. A New York

Times article on the subject indicated that guards involved in this incident were told they could be fired if they told anyone about it, and also reported that even *after* this disaster, guards at Oak Ridge were found to be using live ammunition when practicing discharging and reloading their weapons even though they were supposed to be using blanks.

- A March 2004 DOE IG report found that four DOE sites where Wackenhut Corporation holds the security contract (Nevada Test Site, Savannah River, Rocky Flats, Oak Ridge's Y-12) "had eliminated or modified significant portions of the training while others were not using realistic training delivery methods," such as not conducting basic training in the use of shotguns, and modifying or excluding other required security training elements.
- In January 2004, the DOE IG also found that Wackenhut supervisory personnel had been tipped off in advance during a DOE drill developed to ensure that the Oak Ridge site's protective force could respond to potential security threats, such as a terrorist attack. Government investigators concluded that Wackenhut's actions were improper and had tainted the test results to the degree that they could not be relied upon.

The Congressman's letter requested detailed information regarding these incidents, DOE corrective actions, and why DOE continues to allow Wackenhut Corporation to guard DOE nuclear weapons facilities in light of the numerous reports of Wackenhut personnel cheating on security tests, altering training requirements, violating regulations, failing at security exercises and retaliating against whistleblowers.

For a copy of the letter or other materials regarding security at DOE nuclear weapons facilities, please see www.house.gov/markey.